



Policy No. 111

Supporting Families Facing Developmental Disabilities Issues

Adopted: January 21, 2000

The Developmental Disabilities Council believes in supporting families.

Families are whoever they determine themselves to be; this may include people beyond the biological family and/or household.

Resources should be available to support the needs of families.

Supporting families requires a mindset of building on people's strengths and capacities in a holistic, ethnically and culturally sensitive manner.

Supporting families requires an environment in which individuals with developmental disabilities and their families work together to:

- Determine their own goals;
- Experience their own power;
- Exercise choice;
- Develop positive relationships with people in their communities; and
- Be supported in their communities to care for each other.

Supporting families means:

- Reflecting the importance of prevention or intervention at the earliest possible opportunity;
- Responding flexibly to the needs of families and individuals; and
- Supporting opportunities for families to become better connected to each other and their communities.

The Developmental Disabilities Council believes that communities, together with public and private entities, can support an individual- and family-centered/directed system that:

Exemplifies and promotes an ethic of prevention and early intervention to ensure that supports for families are early, proactive and address needs before crises develop;

Designs policies that provide families and individuals access to supports and services early enough to minimize or prevent crises, financial impoverishment or relinquishment of parental rights and responsibilities;

Provides a forum for a collaborative, planning process with families that respects families' values and is ongoing and multidisciplinary;

Provides incentives to organizations, agencies and groups to empower and support families and individuals;

Ensures accessible, dependable, quality, statewide services and supports are available for families;

Ensures outcomes are based on quality-of-life indicators;

Supports families and individuals who chose to care for family members or themselves in their own homes and communities;

Provides options that enhance the safety and well-being of all family members;

Provides support and services in an efficient and effective manner.

Is evaluated by people receiving services to determine the degree to which these principles are implemented.